What is claimed is:

1. A holding unit for holding a substrate, said holding unit comprising:

a holder plate; and

a vacuum suction member adapted to be brought into contact with a peripheral portion of a surface of the substrate to suck the substrate, said vacuum suction member having no contact with regions of the substrate other than the peripheral portion.

2. A holding unit of claim 1, wherein said vacuum suction member is shaped so as to surround an element forming region of the substrate, thereby preventing processing from being applied to the element forming region.

3. A holding unit of claim 1, wherein said vacuum suction member has an annular groove and an exhaust path formed therein, said annular groove being open in a side facing the substrate, and said exhaust path opening to said annular groove.

4. A holding unit of claim 1, wherein a material forming a portion of said vacuum suction member to be brought into contact with the substrate has a hardness lower than that of the substrate.

5. A processing apparatus for processing a substrate, said processing apparatus comprising:

a holding unit of claim 1; and

a surface processing unit for processing the surface of the substrate held by said holding unit.

6. A processing apparatus of claim 5, further comprising a unit operable to perform at least one of cleaning and drying of the substrate.

7. A processing apparatus of claim 5, further comprising a dipping bath for dipping the substrate held by said holding unit.

8. A processing apparatus of claim 5, further comprising an evaluation unit operable to check a condition of the substrate after processing and to determine a resultant condition achieved by processing the surface of the substrate.

9. A holding unit of claim 1, wherein said holder plate has a purging aperture for purging gas into a space defined by said holder plate, said vacuum suction member and the substrate.

10. A holding unit of claim 3, wherein said annular groove is substantially V-shaped.

11. A holding unit of claim 3, wherein said annular groove is substantially rectangular shaped.

12. A holding unit of claim 1, wherein said vacuum suction member comprises at least two ring-shaped members forming at least one annular groove therebetween, said annular groove being open in a side facing the substrate.